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*** BEGIN MESSAGE 27 ***
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 CLASS=UNCLAS 3S/FAX
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 SERIAL: PM1704132591
 PASS: COPY TO [REDACTED]
 COUNTRY: USSR
 SUBJ: DIVERGING OPINIONS ON CAUSE OF SASOVO EXPLOSION
 REF: LD1204142191 MOSCOW TASS ENGLISH 121303 -- 'STRANGE ROAR'
 PRECEDES 'MYSTERIOUS BLAST' IN SASOVO
 SOURCE: MOSCOW PRAVDA IN RUSSIAN 15 APR 91 FIRST EDITION P 3
 TEXT:

//((CORRESPONDENT N. KIREYEV REPORT: "INCIDENTS: SALTPETER
 BLOWN UP FROM UFO?"))

((TEXT)) RYAZAN OBLAST -- A HIGHLY POWERFUL EXPLOSION RANG OUT
 AT MIDNIGHT 12 APRIL NEAR THE SMALL CITY OF SASOVO IN THE RYAZAN
 AREA. THE SHOCK WAVE ROARED DOWN ITS STREETS, RIPPING OFF ROOFS IN
 SOME AREAS AND KNOCKING OUT WINDOWS -- EVEN THE FRAMES -- IN A GOOD
 HALF OF THE APARTMENT BLOCKS, BUILDINGS, AND STRUCTURES. ACCORDING
 TO EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS, MULTISTORY BLOCKS ROCKED AS IN AN
 EARTHQUAKE.

THE ALARMED RESIDENTS COULD NOT RECOVER THEIR COMPOSURE BEFORE
 MORNING, LOST IN CONJECTURE AS TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED. INCIDENTALLY,
 NO ONE SUFFERED SERIOUS INJURY ALTHOUGH THERE WERE VISITS TO
 MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS: SOME PEOPLE WERE IN SHOCK AND SOME HAD BEEN
 CUT BY BROKEN GLASS...

KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS WERE TEMPORARILY NONOPERATIONAL.
 DRAFTS BLEW THROUGH BUILDINGS BEFORE THE FRAMES WERE COVERED WITH
 POLYTHENE FILM.

"THE POPULATION IS NOW LESS WORRIED ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE
 INCIDENT," A, ROZHKOVA, CHAIRMAN OF SASOVSKIY RAYON SOVIET OF
 PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES AND PARTY RAYKOM (RAYON PARTY COMMITTEE) FIRST
 SECRETARY, BELIEVES, "THAN BY THE UNCERTAINTY. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR
 WHAT CAUSED THE EXPLOSION. SOME PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT MUNITIONS
 LEFT BURIED SINCE THE LAST WAR, WHILE OTHERS CLAIM THAT A POWERFUL
 AIR BOMB FELL, A THIRD GROUP BLAME IT ON A METEORITE, AND A FOURTH
 GROUP BLAME UFO'S... THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SUPPOSEDLY SAW A MOVING
 FIERY SPHERE."

"MILITARY MEN WHO VISITED THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION," ANATOLIY
 FEDOROVICH WENT ON, "PUT FORWARD THEIR OWN HYPOTHESIS: THEY SAY
 THAT AMMONIUM NITRATE EXPLODED. WE DO NOT KNOW WHOM AND WHAT TO
 BELIEVE. ONE THING IS REASSURING: NO VARIATIONS IN THE RADIATION
 BACKGROUND AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE ATMOSPHERE HAVE BEEN
 DETECTED. WE ARE WAITING FOR SPECIALISTS FROM THE USSR ACADEMY OF
 SCIENCES AND FOR THE RESULTS OF A CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL ANALYSIS."

CERTAINLY, THE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION IS STILL A MYSTERY
 ALTHOUGH THE CRATER 1 KM FROM THE CITY, 28 METERS IN DIAMETER, AND
 ROUGHLY 4 METERS DEEP IS, REGRETTABLY, A REALITY. ALONGSIDE THERE
 WERE 30 TONNES OF FRESH AMMONIUM NITRATE WHICH WAS BROUGHT TO THE
 FIELD 5 APRIL TO FERTILIZE THE PLANTS. BUT CROP FARMERS HAVE,
 AFTER ALL, SUCCESSFULLY USED THIS FERTILIZER FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW
 THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ABROAD. LOCAL AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY
 WAREHOUSES CONTAIN 10,000 TONNES OF SALTPETER FROM THE CONSIGNMENT

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THAT EXPLODED. THANK GOD, ALL IS QUIET THERE.

THE INVESTIGATION SHOULD ULTIMATELY SHED LIGHT ON THE SASOVO
"WONDER EXPLOSION."

(ENDALL) 15 APR [REDACTED] 17/1342Z APR

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